


STUDIES IN
LEVITICUS



REV. HUBERT
BROOKE M. A.



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BY THE
REV. HUBERT BROOKE, M.A.

INCUMBENT OF ST. MARGARET'S, BRIGHTON,
AUTHOR OF
"THE VISION OF THE CANDLESTICK,"
"THE TEMPLE OF HIS BODY," "PERSONAL CONSECRATION,"
ETC.

London
MARSHALL BROTHERS
KESWICK HOUSE, PATERNOSTER ROW

1901

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE.
I. THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS	I
II. THE DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK	9
III. FIRST PORTION: SACRIFICE	14
IV. THE USE OF THE SACRIFICES	27
V. SECOND PORTION: PRIESTHOOD	33
VI. THE HIGH PRIEST'S ORNAMENTS	49
VII. THE COMMON PRIESTHOOD	57
VIII. THIRD PORTION: PURITY	67
IX. THE PRINCIPLES OF PURITY	77
X. LEPROSY AND ATONEMENT	85
XI. FOURTH PORTION: HOLINESS	93
XII. THE AUTHENTICATION OF THE BOOK . .	107
XIII. DEVOTION AND FREEWILL OFFERINGS .	105

STUDIES IN LEVITICUS

CHAPTER I

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

“And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the Tabernacle of the Congregation” (Leviticus i. 1).

THE opening words of the Book of Leviticus suggest at once its connection with the preceding Book of Exodus. If Leviticus had been the first book in the Bible, and we began to read its first verse, we should have asked in total ignorance: “Who were the congregation? What was the Tabernacle? Who was Moses?” But for one who has read the pages of Exodus, each of those questions requires no further answer: Exodus has answered them beforehand. In the same way, if Exodus had been the first book, it would have led us to ask: “Who were the children of Israel? What brought them to Egypt?”

Who was Jacob ? ” But the preceding book has already told us ; and the reader of Genesis is prepared for Exodus, as the reader of Exodus is ready for Leviticus.

This intimate relation between the opening books of the Bible serves not only to tell us that they are given to us in proper order for an intelligent grasp of their history and meaning, but suggests also that their spiritual use and purpose must be apprehended in the same order. They form in fact the very A B C of religious knowledge : Genesis representing the first lesson of man's ruin and lost estate ; Exodus unfolding the second step of the divine redemption and way of salvation ; Leviticus providing the immediate consequence to those two steps, in the revelation of God's way of holiness and communion.

It is safe to say that the practical purpose of Leviticus can never be attained in any life, unless the lessons of Genesis and Exodus have already been mastered. It may perhaps be said further, that the comparatively small interest taken in this third book by the ordinary reader of the Bible is due to his feeble or partial apprehension of the purpose and point of the former two. Genesis

emphasizes man's ruin, shows him as a sinner and coming short of the glory of God, and makes it plain that in every condition of trial and treatment he only comes out a failure. In Paradise, before the Flood, after the Flood, in the chosen family, and in the covenant of God—still man fails. And his failure is well depicted by the place where God's chosen people are found in the last chapter of Genesis: in Egypt, the very emblem of the world that knows not God. Exodus takes up the story of those whom God designs to bless, shows them not only in Egypt, but in hopeless and helpless bondage there, and proceeds to unfold God's wonderful redemption: His work, and His alone, from the first thought to the final accomplishment. God, and God alone, redeems, delivers, attracts to Himself, separates, and appropriates His people. The closing chapter of Exodus signifies the accomplishment of the first stage of redemption, by picturing the habitation of God and His manifested presence in the very centre of the congregation of Israel.

Consider for a moment with what absolute certainty these first two lessons had been learnt and were known by Israel. You could not imagine that any single Israelite was in doubt as

to his deliverance and redemption from Egypt, his nearness and relationship to God, his final escape from the old bondage, or his perpetual calling to be henceforth God's own possession. Had you asked him such questions, you are sure what His answers had been. "Are you really free from Egypt, and for ever?" "Yes, for ever." "Will you never be in danger of renewed bondage?" "No, the Red Sea flows between; we shall never go back." "Are you not afraid that you may go astray, and be again caught and enslaved?" "No, God is in our midst; He goes before us to guide and deliver; He is going to take us into the promised land." Certainty, assurance, conviction, mark the knowledge and the expectation of every true Israelite.

What a pity that the same joyous ring of positive confidence does not mark every Christian and the whole Church of Christ to-day! How many souls are called by the name of Christian and are considered as members of the Church, that have not yet taken the lowly place of the publican—"God be merciful to me a sinner"—and have not accepted the humbling lesson of Genesis. They are not sure that they are so lost

that nothing of their own can ever save them. How many again, who do know that first lesson, and really confess their own lost estate, are yet uncertain about the second, the glorious story of a finished and perfect redemption wrought out by Christ and freely given to the believing soul. Ask many a Christian what you might have asked the Israelite of old, and what answer will you receive? "Are you really delivered from this present evil world and for ever?" "I am not sure, but I hope I shall be." "Are you free from its slavery, never to be entangled again in its yoke of bondage?" "I am trying to be." "Are you not afraid that after all you may be ensnared again, and may yet prove to be a lost sheep?" "Yes, I am afraid, and wish I were more certain." Surely, if any such uncertainty prevails in any so-called Christian heart, the lessons of Genesis and Exodus are not yet learnt; and it is no wonder that the lessons of Leviticus are unintelligible, tasteless, and undesired.

The very position of the book decides in this way the kind of person and the condition of soul to which its teaching is adapted, and for which it is intended. Let us describe them. Those who have come to know that in them, in their

flesh, dwelleth no good thing ; that they have no power to help or save themselves ; that they are helpless dependents on God's grace ; that He must alone be their Saviour, or they will be unsaved. Those who have further learnt that God has provided a way of salvation for lost souls like themselves, a finished sacrifice to cover all their sins, a perfect redemption from the power of the enemy, a present pardon of all past sin, an immediate access to the presence of a reconciled God, Those yet again who, knowing this provision of God's grace, have gladly accepted it, taken it for their own, found it true for themselves, and are not ashamed to confess the Lord as their own Saviour. Those once more who believe in God's covenant of grace, binding them to Himself, and providing in them an habitation for Himself by His Spirit. Such a people, and such souls, sinners saved by grace, pardoned, redeemed, brought nigh, built up on Christ, and indwelt by the Spirit of God : these are they who correspond to Israel's condition at the end of the Book of Exodus, and are ready for the lessons of Leviticus.

This is a matter that touches us personally one by one. Only when we have learnt the lesson of

Genesis—that we are ruined and lost souls—are we ripe for the blessed lesson of Exodus. A man that does not think himself lost and enslaved does not want or desire salvation and redemption, which is the central topic of Exodus. Here you see it, and find it, when you really need it. Here for ruined mankind, here for ruined me and ruined you, there is a redemption provided of God, pictured in this Old Testament page, and fulfilled in the New Testament story, ready now for the use of every soul that is ready for it. That redemption is something to be heard of, and understood, and known; then to be taken, and received, and possessed consciously. Yes, consciously; for one whole book of the Bible was written to make believers conscious of this their possession (1 Jno. v. 13).

Again, the next step is as personal as the first. Only when the lesson of Exodus is consciously learnt—that God's redemption is yours and by it you are His, that He thereby makes you His habitation and wants you for His service—only then are you prepared for the lesson of Leviticus. For Leviticus is entirely occupied with the condition of those who are redeemed, delivered, brought nigh, indwelt and possessed by

God. How then can you or I understand this lesson, if we are in doubt about our deliverance and nearness, if we are afraid to profess these facts and to act on the assumption that they are ours? No, Leviticus is a closed book for the doubtful, and uncertain, and vague, and half-hearted; but an open and illuminated book for every soul that praises God for His pardon, His peace, His nearness, and His indwelling.

Pause, reader; ponder and make sure for yourself, where and whose you are. Consider that these are gifts, part of the one great "Gift of God, eternal life"; given freely to every soul that will "stoop down and drink and live."

"Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee.
O Lamb of God, I come."

CHAPTER II

THE DIVISIONS OF LEVITICUS

“And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him” (Lev. i. 1).

“And the Lord spake unto Moses ” (Lev. viii. 1 ; xi. 1 ; xvii. 1).

THIS book of Leviticus has a very marked character of its own. The best way to distinguish the special characteristics of any one book, or chapter, or section of the Bible, is to notice or mark the emphatic words or phrases which recur with particular frequency. And when this book is searched for such marks, they appear with such extraordinary force of repetition and emphasis, that its character stands out with pre-eminent vividness. The whole book, and each of its four great divisions, are alike distinguished in this way; and the main purpose and particular lesson in each case is unmistakably enforced.

The opening sentence of the book gives the first of these key-notes, when we read, “And the Lord called unto Moses and spake unto him.”

These words, “AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES,” recur at the beginning of each of the main divisions of the book (viii. 1 ; xi. 1 ; xvii. 1), and at many of the sub-divisions. So that altogether in these twenty-seven chapters the phrase is found not less than thirty-six times.*

This is worthy of particular notice. No other book of the Bible has quite the same peculiarity. Whilst “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” yet this portion of it reports more of the exact words of God than any other. It conveys peculiarly God’s voice and God’s words. There is an authority herein sufficient to calm every doubt ; there is a joyous assurance that all is authenticated by God. A particular proof and evidence of the Divine authentication of this book will be noticed in chapter xxvi.† ; but for the present we take it just as it is written, and rejoice to know that here the very words of God are uttered to His people, spoken from His

* Having either found this, and similar numbers mentioned later, by individual study, or verified them when quoting from other writers, I can answer for their exactness as a *minimum* ; but it is possible that other students may find references which have escaped my notice, and so arrive at a larger *maximum*.

† See page 108.

sanctuary in their midst. "I will . . . watch to see what He will say unto me. The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Hab. ii. 1, 20).

Leviticus is clearly sub-divided into four sections, each of which is again distinguished by the frequent recurrence of a set of words, or phrases, or ideas. The first section comprises the first seven chapters, and is marked by the constant repetition of the words "SACRIFICE," "OFFERING," and "OBLATION," in the English version. These occur altogether not less than three hundred and one times in the Book of Leviticus, and of these one hundred and ninety-four times in this opening section of the first seven chapters. That suffices to tell us that these chapters will be full of the one great topic of sacrifice.

The next section, chapters viii. to x., is entirely occupied with the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. The word "PRIEST," which occurs in Leviticus one hundred and eighty-six times, curiously enough is not found in these three chapters at all. Yet for understanding the whole meaning and force of the word we depend upon this section; and its occurrence in the rest of the book must be taken in the light of

this story of the consecration of the priest in these chapters.

The third section, from chapter xi. to chapter xvi., is distinguished by the words "CLEAN" and "UNCLEAN," and their compounds; which occur in the whole book two hundred times, and in this section alone one hundred and sixty-four times. The key-note to this third portion is therefore purity.

The fourth section, chapters xvii. to xxv., with the appendix of the two closing chapters, is marked by the words "HOLY" and "SANCTIFY." These with their compounds occur in the whole book one hundred and thirty-one times, and in this last section eighty-one times; thus giving the subject of holiness as key-note to the closing portion of the book.

It is significant that the order of the sections, as well as their topics, should be such as these key words indicate. Remembering that the book is written for those who are consciously God's redeemed, reconciled, pardoned, and accepted people, it reveals at once what God expects from them and how the expected life can be lived. He evidently expects the life of His people to be stamped with the kindred marks of holiness and

purity: "Ye shall be holy," "Be ye clean," are the direct commands of God. Then the preceding sections are obviously connected with these commands; and they suggest to us that only through sacrifice and priesthood can such a life be lived and such commands obeyed. Purity and holiness are inseparably bound up with sacrifice and priesthood. Be it our aim to apprehend the power of these latter topics in order that we may attain to the experience of the former. "Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . gave Himself for us, that He might redeem from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 13, 14).

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST PORTION OF LEVITICUS : SACRIFICE

“ This is the law of the burnt-offering, of the meat-offering, and of the sin-offering, and of the trespass-offering, and of the consecration, and of the sacrifice of the peace-offerings ” (Lev. vii. 37).

THE first section of the book deals entirely with the subject of sacrifice, and the seven chapters which comprise it have to do with five different forms of sacrifice.

Before we consider these five forms more closely, it is worth while to notice carefully for whom they were intended, and to guard against a mistaken idea as to what they were intended to effect.

We have already noticed that the whole book is addressed to a consciously redeemed people, in whose midst God has taken up His abode. These sacrifices are therefore not intended to impart redemption or salvation in its primary sense, nor to bring a redeemed soul or a redeemed people near to God. That had already been done by the

Passover sacrifice, the sprinkled blood, the divided Red Sea, and the Covenant Sacrifice at Sinai.

So then, whatever these lessons on sacrifice are to teach us, they are not intended to bring us from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. Rather are they intended to teach further lessons only meant for those who have already thus been brought out and brought nigh to God in Christ.


Further, these sacrifices were appointed for a people who had been already brought into covenant relationship with God, and were already pledged to a grateful and life-long service to Him. Such had been Israel's experience in Exodus xxiv., nine months before the Book of Leviticus began. Therefore we are not to look here for the way by which we are brought thus into living union with God : that lesson is supposed to have been already learnt before this lesson begins.

"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7). "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). These are the words that point the sinner to Christ, and to deliverance, pardon, and peace in Him. They must be known, as Israel knew the Passover lesson, before Leviticus can be learnt and understood.

"This cup is the new covenant in My blood" (Luke xxii. 20). That reminds us of the old covenant recorded in Exodus xxiv., and teaches us that every pardoned soul is called into covenant relationship, and pledged to life-long service, as soon as it has come to Christ. Then, when thus pledged to Him and saved by Him, like Israel out of Egypt and under Sinai, we are ready for the further lessons of Leviticus.

Perhaps the shortest phrase to express the purpose of Leviticus, and the object of these chapters on sacrifice, is this: ~~We are not here to be made nigh~~, but to be *kept* nigh, to ~~God~~. For even when delivered "from this present evil world" (Gal. i. 4), when "made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 13), when "delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. i. 13), when "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10,) still we are sinners by nature; still we dwell in this body of humiliation; still in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing; still apart from Him we can do nothing. What then are we to do? How is the case to be met? What can enable us to keep a cleansed conscience

and a restful heart? What can meet our need, and fit us to serve God acceptably? Here is your answer. Here in Leviticus the need is met, and the lack of your sinful condition supplied by Christ, the antitype of the five-fold form of sacrifice here described.

It is an old and useful division of the sacrifices described in God's Word, to range them under the the threefold heading of *expiatory*, *dedicatory*, and *eucharistic*. This division applies well to the five forms detailed in these first chapters of Leviticus. The first two—the burnt-offering and the meat or meal-offering—are forms of dedicatory sacrifice, by which the dedication and surrender of the offerer to God's perfect service is expressed. The next—the peace-offering—is a eucharistic or thank-offering, by which the soul expresses its praise to God and its communion with God. The last two—the sin-offering and the trespass-offering—are expiatory sacrifices, dealing with the removal of sin's defilement and the pardon of its guilt. 

The order in which they are here described is not that in which Israel used to present them. Israel then, and the Christian now, in the maintenance of their right relation to God must ever

remember that after all they are sinners ; pardoned indeed, reconciled and cleansed, accepted and welcome in Christ, but sinners still. So in the actual use of them, the sin and trespass-offerings always came first. Then, in the consciousness that the question of sin in them was fairly provided for, the burnt and meat-offering followed, by which they expressed their desire to devote their whole powers to God for His service only. Lastly, in the peace of a cleansed conscience and a surrendered life, there followed the peace-offering, to express unclouded fellowship and heart-communion with God.

In the story of the revival under Hezekiah, this order in presenting the sacrifices is expressly recorded. In 2 Chron. xxix. 21, we read : " And they brought seven bullocks . . . for a *sin-offering* for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah." Then in verse 27 : " And Hezekiah commanded to offer the *burnt-offering* upon the altar." Lastly, in verse 31 : " Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near and bring sacrifices and *thank-offerings* into the house of the Lord." Remembering that thank-offerings are one form of the peace-offering (Lev.

vii. 11, 12), and that the word "eucharist" means thanksgiving, you find this story an apt illustration of the right order of sacrifice and of service. Always expiation first, dedication second, and communion third.

Turning now to these five forms of sacrifice, in order to find their exact meaning, the New Testament acts as an explanatory commentary in applying each of them to Christ.

The burnt-offering, chapter i., in which the whole sacrifice was consumed upon the altar, expresses the entire dedication of the offerer to God, and God's good pleasure therein as a sweet savour to Him. This aspect of the sacrifice of Christ is indicated in Ephesians v. 2: "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." And the same thought is apparent in the key-note of the Saviour's life: "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John vi. 38). That was the one and only perfect life of dedication, the true antitype of the burnt-offering, and it was given "for us."

The meat-offering, chapter ii., or (as the Revised Version more accurately translates it) the meal-

offering, was composed mainly of fine flour, and is generally taken to represent a dedicated life in its use for mankind, since flour is the universal food of man. It is a fact that God habitually uses for His service among men the lives and powers of those who are truly dedicated to Him; and this seems to be expressed by the fact that the burnt-offering always had the meat-offering attached to it. So you read in Numbers xv. 2-4: "When ye . . . will make . . . a burnt-offering . . . Then shall he that offereth his offering bring a meat-offering." Our Lord's life is a perfect representation of this, in that it is said of His life of ministry: "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil"(Acts x. 38). And again: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28).

The peace-offering, chapter iii., expressed, as no other offering did, the idea of a communion between God and the offerer. Part of the sacrifice was consumed on the altar, representing God's participation and pleasure therein; part was eaten by the priest; and the remainder was food for the offerer and his household. Here is a

vivid picture of communion, a foretaste of the Lord's Supper, a representation of intimate fellowship enjoyed by His people with the Father and the Son. In the Son, by His sacrifice and priesthood, we are made nigh : " truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ " (1. Jno. i. 3). " Now in Christ Jesus ye . . . are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our Peace " (Eph. ii. 13, 14).

The sin-offering, chapter iv., shows how the great question of sin, as a breach of God's commandments whether consciously or unconsciously committed, requires atonement, and finds it provided through the sacrifice appointed of God. This is the very foundation lesson of the cross of Christ. There, and there alone, is the true sin-offering found, that can meet to the full God's demands and cover completely man's failures. For God " hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made (or become) the righteousness of God in Him " (2 Cor. v. 21). And again : " Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself " (Heb. ix. 26). The infinite value of the offering gives infinite value to the sacrifice, and ensures the perfect pardon of those who use it.

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The trespass-offering, chapter v. and vi. 1-7, concerns rather individual acts of wrong-doing, and especially those by which another is defrauded or suffers loss. If the sin-offering particularly meets the fact of sin in the soul, the trespass-offering applies more closely to acts of sin. Here also the Lord Jesus is seen as the anti-type, of whom it is said: "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 28). "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins" (1 Jno. iii. 5). This meets the question of every conscious sin, as the sin-offering that of inherent sinfulness and unconscious defect. The two offerings are strikingly applied to the individual Christian's use in 1 John i. 7-9 in this way: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." This is the walk of a consecrated life, as represented by the burnt-offering, in enjoyment of communion through the peace-offering, and so, kept under the power of the sin-offering. The passage continues: "If we say that we have no sin," viz., no sin from which we need the

cleansing of verse 7, “we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Here is consciousness and confession of particular sins, with the application of the trespass-offering to meet them.

A particular mark is attached to the forgiveness and acceptance through the trespass-offering, which is not found with any other sacrifice. In all the others, if the offerer brought the right sacrifice and dealt with it in the prescribed manner, the blessing attached to it was at once obtained, the acceptance, communion, and pardon were fully and freely imparted. But in certain cases of the trespass-offering another condition was attached, without which the pardon was not obtained. The trespass-offering had frequently to be offered where the sin affected another person, either God or a fellow-mortal, and in some way defrauded and wronged him, and caused him to suffer loss. Then, in addition to the trespass-offering, amends had to be made to the wronged one, before the pardon was obtained. When the wrong concerned God and His claims, chapter v. 14-16, the offering was

first presented, then amends had to be made by restoring the amount of the wrong with an added fifth; and then the soul was forgiven. But if the wrong concerned a fellow-man the order was inverted: chapter vi. 1-7: "If a soul sin and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was committed him to keep, or in fellowship (margin, in dealing; Revised Version, bargain), or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these things that a man doeth, sinning therein: Then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away . . . he shall even restore it in the principal and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass-offering. And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord . . . and it shall be forgiven him." The whole section is most important, and of practical bearing on the daily life. How often one has wronged another, and, after confessing his sin to God, supposes that he can go away pardoned, without making amends for the wrong. Not so.

The order here is plain and full of significance. First, amends, with an added penalty, had to be made to the one wronged ; and only then could the trespass-offering be brought and pardon be obtained. The New Testament teaches the same lesson : “ If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee ; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift (Matt. v. 23, 24).

Many a Christian conscience is clouded, many a soul suffers from uncertainty of pardon, and lacks assurance of peace and communion with God, because this command is not obeyed, and this order of the trespass-offering is not followed. Through a momentary temptation a neighbour has been wronged, cheated, robbed, oppressed, defrauded, or deprived of his rights, and that by a Christian man. Presently conscience begins to work ; at the next time of prayer, “ when thou bringest thy gift to the altar,” memory begins to stir ; the wrong done rises before the mind ; the troubled soul confesses the wrong, asks pardon, and goes on his way—either with a false sense of pardon, or a lacking sense of it, or with a

hardened heart and a blunted sense of sin. No pardon is granted there, the gift of prayer and praise is not accepted, and will not be—until the wrong is amended. Let us not delude ourselves, let us not trifle with God's way of pardon, let us not leave the wrong unamended. First, confession and amendment to the neighbour; second, confession and use of Christ as the trespass-offering before God; then, and not till then, a conscious pardon, a certain peace, a restful conscience, an unclouded communion

CHAPTER IV

THE USE OF THE SACRIFICES

“Even hereunto were ye called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps” (1 Peter ii. 21).

IN one of our beautiful Collects we pray in these words : “Almighty God, who hast given Thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life ; give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that His inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life.” (Second Sunday after Easter.) That prayer expresses very concisely the two ways in which these lessons of Christ conveyed by the sacrifices are intended to be used by His people.

First, we need to “always most thankfully receive that His inestimable benefit.” There is in His one sacrifice of Himself a wonderful fulness of blessing for His people, a sevenfold blessing as we have just been seeing. First, He is our

Passover, to deliver, save, separate, and bring to God. Secondly, our Covenant Sacrifice, to bind us in life-long service to our Covenant God. Thirdly, our perfect Burnt-offering, to atone for our defective service, to be for us the dedication offering, acceptable to God on our behalf. Fourthly, our Meat-offering, the minister to His fellow men, the succourer of their need, the communicator of blessing from the Father. Fifthly, our Peace-offering, to enable sinful creatures like ourselves to hold, and live in, communion with the Father. Sixthly, our Sin-offering, to meet the great and unconscious defects of our sinful nature by the perpetual cleansing of His precious blood. Seventhly, our Trespass-offering, to bring pardon and cleansing for our conscious, and often wilful, faults; and when these are amended, to assure us of reconciliation and peace.

Each and all of these blessings, a wondrous crown of priceless jewels, are for our constant, immediate, and conscious possession. When St. Paul had spoken of Him as the Sin-offering, in 2 Cor. v. 21, he proceeded at once to tell the use we should make of Him: "We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For He

saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." This day and every day, this hour and every hour, we need, and we may use, this five-fold blessing of the sacrifice of Christ. Morning by morning as we wake, let it be with the consciousness that in the perfect burnt-offering and meat-offering of Christ we are accepted and blessed of God; that in His peace-offering we have the right to commune with Him; that through His sin- and trespass-offering every defect is remedied and every fault will find pardon, the whole day through. "The grace of God" is there, ready for immediate and continual use; let us make sure that we receive it in the power and the efficacy of constant application, and so avoid the danger of receiving it "in vain."

The Collect then teaches us to pray, that we may "also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life." That is the second use for these lessons of Leviticus on sacrifice. It must be second in order, in that, until we have accepted His sacrifice, we cannot follow His example. And it ought to be second in experience, because the acceptance of the sacrifice

is meant to lead us to the example of Christ. If Christ is our example, we may expect to find Him so in this particular of sacrifice, which was the very climax of His life of service. And it is interesting to notice that in relation to each form of sacrifice there is something for us to take as example, and therein to be made like unto Him.

Is He the burnt-offering, a perfect dedication sacrifice to God? Then we too are bidden: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1). We are purchased by His ransom and His redemption; so it is but reasonable that the Purchaser should have His possession. Be sure to give it Him.

Is He the meat-offering, presented to God for the service of man? Then we, too, are to "Owe no man anything, but to love one another," and "Let everyone of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Rom. xiii. 8; xv. 2).

Is He the peace-offering, making and maintaining peace between God and man? Then we too are to be blessed as "peace-makers"; are to "Walk as children of light, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. v. 8-11).

We too are to be links of blessing bringing, others into fellowship with God.

But He is sin- and trespass-offering ; have we anything in which this is our example ? Not for atonement purposes, of course—that He, and He alone could accomplish. But in the fact that He did it for others, bearing their burden of sin ; and that He bore patiently an unjust punishment : herein He is our example. For we too are bidden : “ Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ ” (Gal. vi. 2) ; and, “ if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called ; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps ” (1 Pet. ii. 20, 21).

Let us seek how all this fulness of “ the grace of God ” may become an active factor in our own lives. It provides, through the one perfect sacrifice of Christ, a complete acceptance, a cloudless communion, a continual cleansing, for every believing soul. Let the heart apprehend, and the lips praise, and the soul rejoice in, this blessed provision of the Father : content with nothing less than an apprehension of that for which He has apprehended us.

Then let the life reflect what it has received and is receiving: a surrendered will, a loving walk, a blessing life, a compassionate heart, a patient spirit. This is the calling of God, and the possibility in Christ, that "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND PORTION OF LEVITICUS : PRIESTHOOD

“Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto Me in the priest’s office” (Exodus xxviii. 1).

DEALING altogether with the subject of the priesthood, this second section of Leviticus is comprised of three chapters. Chapter viii. describes the consecration of Aaron and his sons; chapter ix. tells of the first sacrifices offered by Aaron for himself and for the people in his new capacity as high-priest; chapter x. contains the solemn warning of judgment upon the two sons of Aaron, who ventured to offer strange fire, and disregarded God’s commandments concerning their priesthood and its duties.

Preliminary instructions on the subject had been given to Moses in Exodus xxviii. and xxix., to which we shall need to refer for some details not repeated in the present section of Leviticus.

Throughout this portion it is necessary further to keep a clear distinction between the instructions concerning the high-priest, and those concerning the ordinary priests. Of the former we know from the Epistle to the Hebrews that the Lord Jesus is the sole anti-type: none but He is the fulfilment of all that was taught and conveyed by the High Priesthood. Whilst of the latter we find in the New Testament that the antitype is found in all Christians, of whom without any exception and with no limitation it is said: "Ye also . . . are . . . an holy priesthood . . . ye are . . . a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5-9); for Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God" (Rev. i. 5; v. 10).

This section, like all the others, is introduced by the phrase "And the Lord spake unto Moses" (Lev. viii. 1). Then it is stated in the fourth verse that "Moses did as the Lord commanded him"; and this latter phrase occurs ten times in the eighth, twice in the ninth, and once in the tenth chapters. Now a phrase like this is a call to attention and decision. Either the words are true, and it was emphatically the Lord's command that directed all these details and instructions for all the steps concerning the priesthood; or the

statement is false, and the whole story untrustworthy and fraudulent. There is really no third alternative, no middle course between these two. Our present study rests on the confident conviction that these are the very commands of God ; that we are dealing with His literal and exact instructions ; and therefore that we have here matters of particular interest to us, well worthy of the closest study and attention. The further authentication of all this book as the true teaching of God will come before us when chapter xxvi. is under consideration ; which may be regarded as the seal and verification of all that has gone before.

Another important fact should be noticed before the details of this section are studied ; and that is, that up to this time, one full year after Israel's deliverance, there had been no appointment of High Priest and no ministry of the priesthood instituted. There was no high priest nor official body of priests appointed or in existence, when the Passover lamb was slain and all Israel delivered and redeemed from Egypt. Neither is there any mention of priesthood in connection with the baptism of Israel unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea ; nor in their wilderness journey up to Sinai. At Sinai itself (Exod. xix. 5, 6) they

are promised that, on condition of obedience and fulfilment of the covenant then to be made, they shall be unto God "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." Then, still before that promise even could be fulfilled, they have to enter into that covenant and agree to its terms. This they proceed to do in Exodus xxiv., when the covenant was sealed by the threefold sprinkling of the blood upon the altar, people, and book. Only after the covenant has thus been made and entered into, does God give them instructions concerning the Tabernacle, Sacrifices, and Priesthood; which are most fully described in Exodus xxv.-xxx., according to divine pattern; and the execution of these instructions follows in Exodus xxxv.-xl. for the Tabernacle, in Leviticus i.-vii. for the Sacrifices, and Leviticus viii.-x. for the Priesthood.

This delay in the appointment, duties, and service of the priesthood is surely most significant. No priesthood existed or was required for deliverance from Egypt, guidance through the Red Sea and to Sinai, and entrance into covenant with God. Not until the questions of the divine indwelling, continual communion, unhindered access, acceptable worship, actual purity

and positive holiness arise, is the appointment of priesthood necessary and its services essential. For us then the lesson is clear. In order to our deliverance from our lost condition, we need Christ as the Passover Sacrifice and the Lamb of God. To Him we must come, directly and personally, with no intervention of Priest, or Tabernacle, or Temple: "Come unto ME, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In order further to our conscious reconciliation to the Father, obtaining of peace from and with Him. and entrance into covenant service with Him, we need no priesthood ; only Christ as "our peace" gives us "access by one Spirit unto the Father," and makes us fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God (Eph. ii. 14, 18, 19). But then, when we are brought into the condition of Israel at the foot of Sinai, and begin to learn the high calling and the holy calling wherewith we are called, then do we need to know Christ in a new way as the great "High Priest of our profession," and ourselves in a new character as "a royal and an holy priesthood."

In this condition, with conscious deliverance, and present peace, and in covenant relationship to God, we come to learn the lessons of Christ as

our High Priest for ever, as represented by the consecration of Aaron to the High Priesthood of Israel. In Leviticus viii. 6-9, we read the first steps of this consecration in the washing and the clothing of Aaron, with fuller details in Exodus xxviii. 1-43. Then follows the anointing of Aaron (Lev. viii. 12), and the offering of the sin-offering and the burnt-offering for Aaron and his sons (Lev. viii. 14-21). Next we find the unique offering of the ram of consecration, and the manner of dealing with it (Lev. viii. 18-29); and lastly the sprinkling of Aaron and his garments with the mingled blood and oil (Lev. viii. 30).

Every one of these details is part of that which "the Lord commanded Moses," and is fairly intelligible to us in the light of the New Testament teachings concerning Christ. All that was done to Aaron in type, and figure, and emblem has its exact reflection in the perfection and beauty of Christ as our High Priest.

First, Aaron was washed with water (Lev. viii. 6), in order to represent unto us the perfect purity of Christ. "For such an High Priest became us—or, was suited for us—who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26). The washing of Aaron only faintly pictures the

absolute sinlessness and spotlessness of Christ, by which we are assured of the infinite perfection of His High Priesthood.

Next, Aaron was clothed with seven garments, three of a kind which he wore in common with the ordinary priests, and four he wore alone (Lev. viii. 7-9 ; Exod. xxviii. 4, 36). A breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a brodered coat, a mitre, a girdle, and a plate of pure gold as a crown upon the mitre. Coats, girdles, and bonnets were worn also by the other priests (Exod. xxviii. 40) ; but the breastplate, ephod, robe, and crown were peculiar to the High Priest. Other passages of Scripture serve to give particular meaning to each of these garments, with the added lessons from the colours employed—blue, purple, scarlet, and white—which are commonly accepted as pointing respectively to the heavenly, royal, sacrificial, and spotless character of Christ. We may judge therefore that the coat of white linen indicates the purity, the girdle the service, and the mitre or bonnet the intercession, which are to mark alike the High Priest and the ordinary priesthood. The robe of blue will tell of the heavenly and divine nature of Christ ; the ephod, His calling to minister (1 Sam. ii. 19) “the breastplate of judgment,” His power to

guide and instruct (Exod. xxviii. 29 ; Num. xxvii. 21) ; and the crown, His representative character by which His people are always sure of access and acceptance before God (Exod. xxviii. 38 ; Heb. vi. 20 ; ix. 24). All these qualifications for the High Priesthood are named as found in Christ, in the Epistle to the Hebrews—the book which for this as for the other sections is the most perfect commentary on Leviticus : “Holy, harmless, undefiled” tells of the white coat ; “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God” corresponds to the girdle ; “He ever liveth to make intercession for us” depicts the mitre ; “Thou art My Son” proclaims the divine nature signified by the blue robe ; “He hath obtained a more excellent ministry . . . the mediator of the better covenant” is the ephod ; “I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts” proclaims the breastplate ; “Now to appear in the presence of God for us” declares the representation of the golden crown upon the mitre.

The next step was the anointing : “And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron’s head, and anointed him, to sanctify him,” *i.e.*, to separate him for this special office (ver. 12). There is no doubt about the meaning of this

action. It tells of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the Lord Jesus: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (John iii. 34). When we call Him Messiah or Christ, that title simply means in Hebrew or Greek "The Anointed One," qualified by this anointing with all the fullness of the Spirit for His work and office of High Priest. The word here translated "to *sanctify* Him" is in the Greek version of the Old Testament the same word as that applied to Christ in Heb. vii. 28: "The law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is *consecrated* for evermore." This is an important fact for ourselves. Every single blessing, that came to Israel with more or less of imperfection through the high priest of Aaron's line, comes to us in absolute perfection through the abiding High Priesthood of the Lord Jesus. "Consecrated for evermore" with "an unchangeable priesthood." He never passes on to another His exercise of the office; its blessings must come to each one who needs them directly and immediately, or they cannot be obtained at all. Human priests often assume to themselves in these days powers, which exclusively belonged to a

high priest in the days of old, and belong to the Lord Jesus alone to-day. Make sure what those blessings are, beware of seeking them through any other than God's one appointed channel: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest . . . Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast . . . let us come boldly . . . let us draw near" (Heb. iv. 14, 16; x. 22, 23).

After the anointing, the sin-offering and the burnt-offering were offered (Lev. viii. 14-21), and the next matters peculiar to the institution of the High Priest had to do with "the ram of consecration" (ver. 22-29): "Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot" (ver. 23). St. John v. 19-30, will give the counterpart for the Lord Jesus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." His ear, and hand, and foot, touched with the blood of consecration, listened only to the

Father's voice, did only the Father's work, walked only by the Father's will.

A most important result follows from this symbolic putting of the blood upon the ear. In its perfection of reality with our Lord, He declares that He so listened for and received the Father's words, that He never uttered any other than those of the Father's giving. Nowadays many people, who hold generally that our Lord did the Father's will and walked in His ways, are quite uncertain about the authority or absolute and divine accuracy of His words, or even deny that His words are of divine authority and certainty. They allow, so to speak, that His hand and foot were blood-touched and ruled by the Father, but think that His words may have been erroneous or coloured and tainted with human infirmity. They claim for instance that the text of Phil. ii. 7. when He is said to have "emptied himself" (R. V.: Greek *ekenose*), implies that He had given up His divine knowledge and so was liable to utter mistaken words, or words tainted with human infirmity. No! His ear was blood-touched, as well as His hand and foot. He did indeed empty Himself, so that He had given up for a time the independent possession of omnisci-

ence (cf. Mark xiii. 32: "Neither the Son"); but in that condition of emptiness He listened with unbroken attention to the Father's voice, He caught with unerring clearness the Father's meaning, and then He uttered with infallible and absolute authority the Father's words. Read the last four verses of St. John xii., and the matter is settled. By His words everyone that hears them will be judged in the last day. "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak." The words of verse 49 are as absolute and comprehensive as they can be: "What I should say, and what I should speak" includes the ideas of general utterance and individual expression, as though we were to say "My doctrine and outlines of utterance generally, and my exact and individual words of expression." It is difficult to imagine that our Lord could have used language more emphatic and comprehensive than this, in order to express the absolute divine authority of each word He uttered. No loophole of escape is left from the conclusion, that He

meant us to take all His teaching and each word in which He conveyed it, as stamped with the authority of the Father.

When you are dealing with the Lord as your High Priest, do not fear therefore to put complete confidence in every word He uttered. If He states that Moses wrote of Him (Jno. v. 46), then you may be sure that it was Moses who wrote, and that Moses did write of Him. If He declares that in Psalm cx. David called Him Lord (Matt. xxii. 43-45), you are safe in holding that David wrote that Psalm, and David wrote it of Him. Logically there is no third possibility: either our Lord's words are true, and they are credible and authoritative to the letter, or if they are not, there is no reliance to be placed upon His words or authority at all, nothing can be taken as sure and certain. He Himself leaves us in no doubt, He has pledged Himself to the truth of His words: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matt. xxiv. 35). We shall be wise to trust all to Him, and Him to the uttermost.

The next stage in the appointment of the High Priest was the presentation of the definite consecration offerings (Lev. viii. 25-28). Throughout

this and kindred passages, such as 1 Chron. xxix. 5 (see marginal reading), the word "consecrate" is literally in Hebrew "fill the hand." So that the very essence of the idea of consecration is summed up in this action of Aaron in filling his hands. We read that Moses "took the fat, and the fat tail, and all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul of the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right shoulder; and out of the basket of unleavened bread, that was before the Lord, he took one unleavened cake, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and placed them on the fat, and upon the right shoulder; and he put the whole upon Aaron's hands . . . and waved them for a wave-offering before the Lord. And Moses took them from off their hands, and burnt them on the altar upon the burnt-offering; they were a consecration (lit. hand-fillings) for a sweet savour; it was an offering made by fire unto the Lord" (R.V.) This is an emblematic action easily understood. Three sets of things were put on Aaron's hands: all the fat around the inner parts of the offering, specimens of food from the basket of provisions, and the right shoulder of the sacrifice. Briefly we may say that the first of these represents the riches of

the heart's affections; the second, the possessions and property, the basket and store of the offerer; and the third, his bodily powers and strength. Placed upon Aaron's hands and waved before God, they served to express his action as though in these words: "Lord, here are all the powers of my body, all the wealth of my affections, all the possessions of my life. I hold them out, I give them over to Thee. Take them and use them for Thyself." The act of burning them upon the altar was the sign of God's acceptance of the offering, and the consecration was complete.

We have no difficulty in seeing here the very motive and principle of our Lord's life on earth. From the day in which He said: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" to the day when He said: "It is finished!" His life in its affections, its powers, and its possessions was entirely devoted to the Father. And in that life He expressed this action of Aaron when he "filled his hands" unto the Lord.

When all this was done, there remained yet one action by which the whole work was sealed. "And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his garments . . .

and sanctified Aaron and his garments " (ver. 30). The blood of the sacrifice and the oil of anointing were thus made to touch everywhere the man and his garments. He and his surroundings were thus assigned and bound by the tokens of God's covenant to the service of the High Priesthood.

This again speaks of Christ as our High Priest and Representative. To be so in full measure, He must be qualified on our side and qualified on God's side. This final sprinkling bespeaks this twofold perfection: He is accepted as perfectly representing us—"made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17)—and as having perfect right of approach to God—"by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. x. 20). Thus in perfection of High Priestly qualifications He is "entered . . . into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 22).

CHAPTER VI

THE ORNAMENTS OF THE HIGH PRIEST

“ And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders . . . upon his heart . . . and it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead ” (Exodus xxviii. 12, 29, 30, 38).

A CLOSING notice is needed concerning four divinely appointed ornaments attached to the High Priest’s dress, which are named in Exodus xxviii., and serve to show more fully the character of Christ’s representation of His people. In verses 9-12: “ Thou shalt take two onyx stones and grave on them the names of the children of Israel. . . And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders, for a memorial.” The shoulders again are the place of strength; and thus upheld in divine power, the names of His people are borne now, as then, by the great High Priest for a memorial before the Lord. The full picture of

this blessing is seen in St. Paul's words (2 Cor. xii. 9): "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities (weaknesses R.V.) that the power of Christ may rest upon me."


Next, in verses 15 to 29 of Exodus xxviii., we read the description of the breastplate, with its foundation square of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen, and its inset of twelve precious stones, each with the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This breastplate was to be fastened upon the breast of the High Priest when he entered into the holy place, so that "Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." As the shoulder represented the place of strength, so here the heart pictures the place of affection. That the High Priest should bear the names of his people upon his heart when he went in before the Lord, was an assurance that his deepest love was pledged to uphold and remember them in God's presence. Thus of the glorious Antitype we know it to be true: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love"; "I have

loved you, saith the Lord"; "Jesus . . . having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end"; "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 3; Mal. i. 2; Jno. xiii. 1; Rom. viii. 35-39).

The third ornament is described in Exod. xxviii. 30: "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually." It is not known what this Urim and Thummim actually consisted of, but the purpose for which it was used is quite clear. In Num. xxvii. 21 we read: "And he (Joshua) shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congrega-

tion." Every question of guidance and solution of difficulties was thus to be solved, by the inquiries of the High priest with the Urim upon his heart. The same purpose is enforced in Ezra. ii. 63; and is implied in 1 Sam. xxviii. 6. The application of the truth in our great High Priest is plain enough, in His promises of guidance and enlightenment made in Jno. xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13, 15, 25-27.

The fourth ornament follows in Exod. xxviii. 36-38: "And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engraving of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." As the preceding holy ornaments upon the shoulders and breast of the High priest told of provision for our need of strength, of endurance, and of guidance; so does this last give the needed promise of perpetual acceptance with God. As the people drew near to God with their

prayers and offerings, ever with infirmity and insufficiency and iniquity attached to them, how could they be sure that God would hear, and welcome, and receive? How can prayer from sinful hearts and defiled lips prevail to come into the presence of God? Here is the provision. These prayers and sacrifices came not alone; the High priest came with them, and on his forehead this golden crown engraved with HOLINESS TO THE LORD. This prevailed to secure access and acceptance before the Lord for all true prayers of Israel, despite their inherent faultiness. So it is with us. At best our prayers are imperfect, mingled with sin, unfit for God's presence. But we have an High priest, ever before God, and ever accepted in His own perfect holiness. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace; let us draw near with a true heart; let us have grace; by Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb. iv. 16; x. 22; xii. 28; xiii. 15). 

Now consider the wonderful provision of grace and mercy, of confident joy and communion, opened to us through this High Priesthood of Christ. To draw near to God through Him continually is to find the way always wide open and

a welcome access provided ; it is to be assured of the groundwork of a perfect atonement and the possession of an absolute confidence before God. Here and thus we find, and never fail to find, strength sufficient for every need, endurance to the end guaranteed by His everlasting love, guidance provided for every step and in every difficulty, acceptance in the very Holy of Holies of God's presence pledged by our great Forerunner and Representative, Surety and High Priest, Jesus Christ the Lord.

What a life of restfulness and power, of inward peace and outward energy, of cloudless communion and joyous testimony is ours, as we make use of the High Priesthood of Christ, and prove the unfailing truth of His Word : " He that cometh (present participle, is ever coming) to Me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth (is ever believing) on Me shall never thirst " (Jno. vi. 35).

Above all, this provision of the great High Priest should have an important influence on our prayers, and our feelings about them. Sometimes people will say, " My poor prayers will not make much difference " ; or, speaking of someone's utterance in intercession, " What a beautiful prayer that was ! " Yet if the poor prayer and the beautiful prayer came before God by the High

Priest's presentation, the one was as effectual as the other ; the poverty was no hindrance and the beauty no help to its prevailing acceptance with God. If a poor little child is in some difficulty, and gives a cry or writes a line to ask the father's help, the father does not stop to criticize the grammar of the cry or the calligraphy of the letter. He says, " My child wants me ; I am off to help him." So does our High Priest bring every prayer, offered from a believing heart and entrusted to His presentation, to the very presence of the Father ; and there it finds instant welcome and acceptance, sure attention, and certain response. Let us only be careful to bring our prayers through Him, with the incense of His merits and the cleansing of His sacrifice, and we shall prove to the letter the seemingly boundless promises of acceptance : " If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you " (Jno. xv. 7).

On all sides nowadays, lessons of spurious priesthood are put forth, of which the real tendency is to place a distance between the soul and God by the intervention of human priests, and to substitute a fictitious acceptance by their means for the perfect acceptance through the High

Priest Christ Jesus. Let us never allow such an interference between ourselves and Him, nor yield to such a curtailment of Christian privilege and right. Take Hebrews x. 19-22 as for personal use, and you will find that for yourself by the one High Priest, with no other intervening obstacle, you have "boldness to enter into the holiest"—where no ordinary priest and only the High Priest had the right to go; and permission to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Here is the blessing of the High Priesthood of Christ, available in all its fulness daily, hourly, momentarily. Use His provision of grace in ever increasing confidence, and try to lead other and weaker souls into the same satisfying possession, and the same confident liberty of access to God by the great High Priest.

CHAPTER VII

THE COMMON PRIESTHOOD

“I have given your priest’s office unto you as a service of gift.” (Num. xviii. 7).

“We also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Ye are a royal priesthood” (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9).

WHEN Aaron was consecrated as High Priest, his sons were consecrated as priests. Much of the service was common to both, some was peculiar to Aaron. Just as we noticed in the sacrifices, that they represent the Lord “to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life,” so is it here. First He is a gift of the Father, a blessing to be thankfully received and used ; then He is an example to be followed and imitated. The points in the consecration of Aaron which were peculiar to himself, the four garments and the special ornaments and the pouring of the anointing oil, represent characteristics of the High Priesthood of Christ in which he stands alone, and can have neither

follower nor imitator among men. But the points in common to high priest and ordinary priests are full of lessons to us again, as to our call to be followers of Him, and to be growing into the same image.

That these are matters affecting every true Christian, and by no means to be limited to a special class amongst us, appears plainly from the language of St. Peter and St. John, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone . . . Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood." Again, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." And again, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion for ever." St. Peter here states (1. Pet. ii. 5, 9) that all who have "come to Christ," are now an holy and a royal priesthood, and an holy nation. There is no class separated from the rest of the living Church unto the priesthood, as in the days of old. The whole Church is the priesthood, as the whole

Church is the nation. So St. John (Rev. i. 5, 6) declares that all who are loved and washed are also made kings and priests unto God. The duties, responsibilities, privileges, and glories of the priesthood belong to every Christian alike. Let us take heed that we neither neglect the calling and its privileges, nor leave the fulfilment of its holy functions to others. The priestly place and position of nearness to God belongs to every soul that is joined to the Lord; and immense loss has come, both to Church and world, from forgetfulness of the fact and indifference to the calling of priesthood in those whose right it is.

The calling to the priesthood implies, in all who intelligently accept it and take up its responsibilities, just such steps in consecration as were observed by Aaron's sons in the story of Leviticus. Five main steps are to be noted in this proceeding, which must have their counterpart in us if we are rightly to respond to God's call and the title He assigns to us as priests.

First, "Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water" (Lev. viii. 6). That is explained at once by Rev. i. 5, "Unto him that . . . washed us from our sins"; or 1 Cor. vi. 11, "And such were some of you: but ye

are washed." "The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," "The washing of water by the Word," the washing of the feet day by day is the first essential condition of priesthood: "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Is. lii. 11).

Next, "Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them" (Lev. viii. 13). The livery of God's servants is thus deliberately assumed, and the corresponding duties of service formally recognized and accepted as definitely assigned to them, and henceforth to be expected from them. Thus with the pardoned, washed, and cleansed believer, there should follow the recognition of the call to service and the assumption of the garments, by which the servant is distinguished and equipped. We noticed how these three garments were also worn by the High Priest, and that their special significance seems to be this: that the coat indicates the purity, the girdle the service, and the bonnet the intercession, which are indicative of the priestly office. St. Peter, in the passage following the description of the priestly character to Christians, details the purity which should mark their life, in 1 Pet. ii.

II, 12, 21-23 ; iii. 16, 17 : abstinence from fleshly lusts, honest conversation, good works, a Christ-like walk, good conversation in Christ, being the garb and habits corresponding to the white linen coat of Aaron's sons. The girdle of service is represented by St. Peter in 1 Pet. iv. 10 ; v. 5 : "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. . . . Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another." Whilst the bonnet or mitre of intercession is implied in the "Watch unto prayer" of 1 Peter iv. 7, as in 1 Thess. v. 17 ; 1 Tim. ii. 1-3, and many other passages both in the Gospels and the Epistles. Thus is the priestly clothing of Aaron's sons to be recognized in the purity of conduct, readiness for service, and life of intercession of the Christian member of this holy priesthood of the New Testament.

Thirdly, "he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet" (Lev. viii. 24). This picture, representing in the High Priest the dedication of Christ to God's service, is to be the third stage in the equipment of the Christian for

his priestly service. The ear of the blood-bought soul is to be specially blood-marked, claimed as the peculiar possession of the Redeemer, and bidden to listen to His voice and be deaf to any other command than His. The hand of the redeemed one is to be blood-marked, and is to engage henceforth in no work that is not ordered and directed by the Master. The foot of the ransomed sinner is to be blood-marked, that its steps be guided in the future only in God's ways of peace, only in the path of His commandments. Surely this is a faithful summary, a developed picture of the Apostle's words: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body": ear, hand, and foot are His alone; words, works, and ways are to be God-given and taught.

Fourthly, "he took the fat . . . all the fat that was upon the inwards . . . and the right shoulder . . . and one unleavened cake . . . And he put all upon Aaron's hands and upon his sons' hands, and waved them for a wave-offering before the Lord. And Moses took them from off their hands, and burnt them on the altar upon the burnt-offering; they were consecrations for a sweet savour, it is an offering

made by fire unto the Lord" (Lev. viii. 25-28). The consecration, or filling of the hand, of the high priest, is thus repeated in the priests. Here too is the summons to follow in the steps and reproduce the example of Christ. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." So does St. Paul (Rom. xii. 1) apply the consecration of the priests to the calling of the Christian. It is a solemn, a definite, a complete, and a final transaction; once for all the Christian is bidden thus to bring the powers of his body (the right shoulder), the riches of his heart's affection (all the fat that was upon the inwards), and his possessions and worldly goods (the basket of unleavened bread), and to wave them for a wave-offering and present them as a gift to the Lord. We sometimes speak lightly and glibly of consecration, as though it were a simple and common matter. Simple it is, thank God; and common, aye universal, we would it might become. But it is a far-reaching, and heart-searching, and life-embracing undertaking, when done in honesty and full purpose of heart. The truly consecrated Christian keeps back no power of his being, no particle of his affection, and no penny of his

possessions from the Lord; "the government is upon *His* shoulder," what He commands is done.

The fifth and final mark of the priest's institution is thus described: "And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and he sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him" (Lev. viii. 30). So in the New Testament is the Christian described as a sanctified, blood-sprinkled, and anointed being; "Ye are sanctified"; "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience"; "Ye have an unction from the Holy One . . . the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you" (1 Cor. vi. 11; Heb. x. 22; 1 Jno. ii. 20, 27). The man and his garments, the individual and his habits, are to bear all through life the double mark of the blood and the oil, of the Son and the Holy Spirit, bought and cleansed, fitted and empowered for his priestly service.

But the name of "priest" (Greek *hiereus*) of itself implies sacrifice and offering. So must it also with us. Every Christian as one of the holy and royal priesthood is intended "to offer up

spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. ii. 5). What then are the offerings we should render? They are described under three forms. First, as already noted in the consecration offering, the gift of their "bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." (Rom. xii. 1; vi. 13). Then, "the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb. xiii. 15). Thirdly, the offering of alms and communication of earthly possessions, "a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" (Heb. xiii. 16; Phil. iv. 18). It is worth noticing carefully that these are the only sacrifices which Christians as priests are bidden to offer to God, in New Testament pages; that they are due from every Christian; and that they are at once the mark of priestly service and the outward expression of its reality.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Consider Him, in all the blessings which His High Priesthood provides and imparts to you: "let us hold fast, let us come boldly, let us draw near with a true heart." Make use for yourself of all the wondrous nearness to God and confidence before Him, assured by the High Priest, Christ Jesus.

Consider Him again, as calling you to be priests under Him : washed and clothed, blood-marked and consecrated, sprinkled with the blood and oil, offering acceptable sacrifices continually unto God. It is a heavenly calling, a holy calling, a high calling : who will respond to it, and live it out to God's glory ? “ Who then is willing to consecrate His service this day unto the Lord ? ”

CHAPTER VIII

THE THIRD PORTION OF LEVITICUS: PURITY

“For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God : Ve shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth : To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten ” (Lev. xi. 45-47).

THE first two portions of Leviticus have revealed particularly what God does, and is, and gives to His people ; the last two portions are concerned with what His people should be and should do for Him.

When Christ is known as the “ full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world ” ; and when He is further known as the one perfect and only High Priest for His people ; then the question naturally follows, “ What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness ? ” This is practically the subject to which the latter part of

Leviticus supplies the answer, and that in two divisions. Chapters xi. to xvi. explain how the life of God's people is to be *clean*, and chapters xvii. to xxvii. how it is to be *holy*. "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord"; that may serve as motto for the former section; and for the latter, "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." The same two attributes of the Christian life are connected in 2 Cor. vii. 1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us *cleanse* ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting *holiness* in the fear of God." The cleansing coincides with Lev. xi.-xvi., and the holiness with Lev. xvii.-xxvii.

Turning then particularly to the third portion of the book, chapters xi. to xvi., we find ourselves occupied with the subject of purity. Two Hebrew roots are used for the words translated "clean," "unclean," "purify," and their derivatives; and these words, occurring in the whole book not less than two hundred times, are found in this section of six chapters just one hundred and sixty-four times. Such a forceful repetition of the idea of purity, ringing out on the average some twenty-seven times in each chapter, serves

to give immense importance to the subject, arrests attention, and compels inquiry.

The outcome of a full intelligence and real apprehension of the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ is thus at once enforced upon us. A line of demarcation is to be drawn between those who share these blessings and those who do not; a brand of distinction must be put on the former; once and for all they are to be severed from the rest of the world by the heavenly token of purity.

Here, as in preceding sections of the book, we are again brought face to face with the fact that such distinctions can only be made and known by God's revelation. It is as much His Word that is needed to define purity, as it was to instruct about sacrifice and to explain priesthood. The very phrase, "This is the law . . . to make a difference between the clean and the unclean," implies that all such distinctions are to be determined by the Law-giver, not by the law-receiver. He only can say what He wants His people to be, how He means them to be distinguished, what He considers fit and what unfit for the lives that are His and for His glory.

The same lesson is plainly taught in New Testa-

ment pages. St. Paul writes to the Philippians thus: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent—or, try things that differ (*margin*)—that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (i. 9-11). Here is a prayer for Christian progress in knowledge and perception, in discernment and distinction between things differing, in ability and capacity to draw the line according to God's mind; that so the love may abound, the life be clear, and the service fruitful for God's glory. This means much more than the great, broad distinctions between evident right and wrong—which all the world and a babe in Christ know equally well; it means a growing acquaintance with the mind of God, a quick perception even in small details of what He considers sweet, and pure, and pleasant, and what makes our lives fragrant and acceptable before Him. The necessity for the distinction, and the importance of the purity, may be judged from the New Testament, by the fact that the words for "clean" and "unclean" occur respectively sixty-

four and forty-two times ; so that together the idea of purity is enforced by one hundred and six occurrences of the words.

It is the old thought suggested by the question of the prophet Amos : " Can two walk together except they be agreed ? " (iii. 3). God calls us to walk with Him, and in ever progressing familiarity : " We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more " (1 Thess. iv. 1). Agreement is essential for companionship in walk ; and agreement in this case can only mean our agreement with His terms, our acceptance of His conditions. He can never vary them for our inferior thoughts and wishes. Therefore in order to walk with Him, His choice must become ours as to the garments, or habits, or ways in which we are to walk ; His distinctions between clean and unclean must be accepted ; His limitations and definitions welcomed on all points. This it is that gives such special interest to this section of Leviticus, where God's thoughts on purity are revealed to man.

A rapid survey of the chapters of this section reveals three main sub-divisions, Chapter xi. is

concerned with the distinction between animals that were clean or unclean, so that Israel might know what was lawful for them to eat, and what was forbidden and defiling either for food or contact. It shows how close is God's concern for His people, how even small details of their daily life are of interest to Him. It marks how He interferes with that on which they feed and by which they are nourished, so that only what He decides as fit shall be lawful food. It puts a broad line of demarcation between His people and all others. It reminds us by what small matters communion may be hindered or promoted. It bids, as in 1 Cor. x. 31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Chapters xii. to xv. are filled with lessons of purity and impurity for Israel in relation to human beings, their garments and dwellings; all as seen from God's point of view. Chapter xiii. is specially occupied with the marks of the defiling disease of leprosy, in the individual (ver. 1-46) or his garments (ver. 47-59). Chapter xiv. deals first with the law of the cleansing of the leper (ver. 1-32); and then with the law of leprosy in a building (v. 33-57). Chapter xv. contains further

instructions as to conditions of defilement and rules for cleansing. The whole sub-division of these four chapters is full of emphasis for the one idea, that only God can define what He considers clean or unclean, only He can provide and instruct for removal of defilement, only His terms can rule and decide every question of purity for His people.

Chapter xvi., concerned with the great day of Atonement, comes as a fitting climax to the preceding chapters. For these may well suggest the question: "Who then can be clean before God?" Make all the provision you can, use all precautions you may, can you even then be sure that no spot of uncleanness remains, that your conditions for communion are absolutely fulfilled? No; none but God can be sure of that, or can make you to be sure. And that assurance is just what chapter xvi. is intended to provide. Once a year for Israel provision was made on the day of Atonement that "All the iniquities of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins" should be completely removed, and atonement made for every question of uncleanness. For them, in type and figure, once every year; for us in divine reality, once for all, God provided an

Atonement, in the prevailing power of which His people could find a way of cloudless communion and unbroken fellowship with Himself.

Before looking more closely for the underlying principles of these laws of purity, it is worth while noticing that the application of them was strictly limited to Israel. No one outside the chosen race could become a member by submitting to these rules; they were not a condition of entry into Israel's communion, but a consequence of membership. Israel itself was not brought out of Egypt by accepting or keeping them, but, being brought out and brought near, was to maintain that nearness on these conditions. For them and for us the same connection between salvation and purity must prevail. They were brought out, delivered, redeemed, brought near, bound in covenant, made the tabernacle of God and His chosen dwelling place; and then, and only then, came this call to purity and holiness. So for us also, when separated from a ruined world and rebellious race by the redemption of Christ, and in Him brought near to God, then comes the call to mark that separation by a life differing from others by these distinctions of purity and holiness. If bought by and belonging to God, we have no

right to decide for ourselves ; His law is our light upon right and wrong, clean and unclean, true and false, blessing and curse.

This is a fact beyond the intelligence, and not therefore demanded in the experience, of those who are not reconciled to God. There are minute questions of expedient and inexpedient (1 Cor. x. 23), of the will of God (Eph. v. 17), and the things that please Him (2 Tim. ii. 4), which the full-grown Christian recognizes as essential for a life of real walking with God, but which the soul that knows Him not is quite incapable of understanding (1 Cor. ii. 14). A sentence from Deut. xiv. 21 serves to point out this distinction in relation to what was clean or unclean food : "Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself : thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it ; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien : for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God."

It is not therefore a position for the Christian to assume : "I may do this, for others do it." The others may be "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise," while we are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints,

and of the household of God." Our Father alone can decide, and by His decision we should be joyously and thankfully bound, as to what is comely and fitting, "pure, lovely, and of good report" for the members of His family. *Noblesse oblige!* Leave the doubtful, devious, despicable ways of compromise and questionable conduct to those who claim not royal birth. But let the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty walk worthy of their high calling, keep their garments pure, and their ways cleansed; that so the world may take knowledge of them, and own their parentage, and glorify their Father which is in heaven.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRINCIPLES OF PURITY

“ I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people. Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be Mine ” (Lev. xx. 24-26).

THE emphatic “ therefore ” in this passage serves to enforce the first important principle, that purity is a consequence of God’s redemption and the separation effected thereby. In various ways all the important characteristics by which Israel was to be distinguished from other nations are represented as the natural outcome and sequel of God’s redeeming grace. Time after time the prefix to a special command, or the reason for it, is found in the phrase: “ I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.” On that is grounded the call to obedience, the demand for separation, the right of divine ownership, the reason for holiness, and, as in this connection, the

motive for purity. So in 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17 we read the cause and the consequence thus: "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." Others who are not God's temple may do, and say, and think many things which those whom God's Spirit indwells must put away, and leave alone, and keep far from, lest they grieve their divine Inhabitant, and quench His fire, and hinder His inworking.

Another striking fact is apparent from the discoveries of medical science, which indicate that these Mosaic laws about cleanness and uncleanness are really founded on the highest principles of hygiene. Scientific research of to-day declares that obedience to these laws would secure the most perfect bodily health, and that the immunity of the Jewish race in modern times from certain diseases common to other races is entirely due to their observance of Levitical rules. Who taught Moses to know these laws? Who but God, the Maker of the human frame, could have revealed these laws for its most perfect preservation? How

could the forgers, imagined as the writers of this book by the "higher critical" school, discover such absolutely perfect rules of health, which the science of to-day has only now explained? These rules are one of the many indications which verify the opening sentence of Leviticus, occurring thirty-six times in the book, that "the Lord spake unto Moses" the things recorded therein.

The spiritual lesson is as clear, as the natural lesson in these laws is obvious. When Israel came out of Egypt "there was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Psalm cv. 37). Perfect health marked the whole redeemed race; and these Levitical laws had the underlying motive to preserve that healthfulness in them all. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord is upright" (Ps. xcii. 13-15). Such was God's purpose of physical blessing to Israel; such surely is His will in spiritual blessing to His people to-day. St. John wrote to his friend: "I wish (pray, *margin*) above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). He implies thereby

that Gaius was in perfect spiritual health, and he expected him to continue so. And should not the same expectation be verified in all true Christians? Are we ever intended to be spiritually sick or religious invalids? Surely not. Apply the lesson of Leviticus, and you will see that obedience to God's laws of purity is the simplest method for spiritual vigour and health.

Unclean feeders are the readiest victims of certain diseases. That is true physically, according to medical science; and true spiritually, according to Scriptural science. The food on which you nourish your inner life, both mental and spiritual, will practically determine the measure of your spiritual health. Unwholesome food will induce a lowered temperature of the soul and render it a ready prey to evil microbes. The nourishment on which their souls are sustained will explain the frequent indispositions of which Christians are apt to complain. A traveller in the East asked a shepherd if it were true that his sheep would never listen to the voice or follow the steps of a stranger. "No," he replied, "they never do so, unless they are sick!" With good health, and feeding on good pastures, they know, and follow, and love their true

shepherd. But with lowered health from inferior food, their senses are less keen, their liability to go astray is greater. What a lesson for us! What a call to heed the Master's rules, to avoid what He forbids, to choose what He counsels, to feed in the pastures where He leads, that our souls may be in full health and our lives rich in fruitful service.

How everyday life bears out this principle. The moment a young man goes into training for some athletic contest, a change comes over his manner of life. Many things, otherwise harmless in themselves, are left alone and never touched. Why? Because they do not conduce to the most perfect physical health. Food, sleep, exercise are all considered in relation to one end—success in the contest. Luxuries are refused, smoking is stopped, irregular food or drink is forbidden, to insure the highest possible physical health. Even before we come to the spiritual analogy, it is surely a question worth considering whether the Christian's body should not always be "in training," whether he has the right to keep that which is God's (1 Cor. vi. 20) in anything but the highest condition of usefulness. Does He want us at our best for His service, or will He be

equally pleased if we be two or three grades below par? If He taught Israel laws of physical health, it would surely seem natural to suppose that He means the same principles to prevail to-day with the added boon of spiritual health. The latter always, and the former as far as may be, should surely be our prayer as it was that of St. John. Take the trouble to search out God's laws of purity, and counsels what to avoid; be diligent to obey them consistently; and you will have the continual joy of sound soul-health, and perpetual readiness for the Master's service.

In very apt connection with this topic is the constant occurrence in the Pastoral Epistles of the epithet "wholesome," or "sound." We read of "sound doctrine" (1 Tim. i. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 3; Tit. i. 9; ii. 1), "wholesome words" (1 Tim. vi. 3), "sound words" (2 Tim. i. 13), "sound in the faith" (Tit. i. 13; ii. 2); all showing that conditions of the soul's health depend on the wholesomeness of the food in doctrine and faith upon which it is nourished. A consecrated life, which it is the calling of all God's "royal priesthood" to live, is intended thus to be marked and severed from others: its food and sustenance must be carefully chosen, its health and powers sedulously

cultivated, that so God may be glorified with body and spirit which are His. "Ye shall therefore put a difference . . . for I . . . have severed you . . . that ye should be mine." "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31).

Another underlying thought in these rules for purity given to Israel is, that they present the constant antithesis between life and death. All that tends to life and life abundant is to be accepted, used, fostered, and developed. All else that in any way tends to lower the powers of life, and that thus opens the way to decay of power and to death, must be absolutely avoided. This is the spiritual truth conveyed in the New Testament by the instruction that the first elements of the Gospel include "repentance from dead works" (Heb. vi. 1); by the striking contrast in Heb. ix. 13, 14: "If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" The Lord who came "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly,"

evidently means His people to be in vigorous spiritual health. Dead works, dead food, dead likings, dead longings ought to be kept far from such lives. They should be ever at their best, and that best ever growing better (2 Pet. iii. 18). It is for us to throw our hearts into the same gracious purpose, to seek a familiar acquaintance with the rules of such health, and to prove the joy of a life submitted to those rules and developed to its highest capacity.

CHAPTER X

LEPROSY AND ATONEMENT

“And the leper . . . shall cry, Unclean, unclean ”
(Lev. xiii. 45).

“And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel ” (Lev. xvi. 19).

THE awful description of the disease of leprosy is probably the fullest existing revelation of the manner in which God regards sin in the human soul, and life, and surroundings. Here are two chapters containing 116 verses in relation to this disease, giving its marks, and effects, and tokens of cleansing, and sacrifices connected with it; whilst running all through them is the constant refrain of “clean” and “unclean.” It seems to declare in striking terms God’s thoughts about sin, and every phrase about the leprosy is true about sin.

It is a loathsome thing, whether found in a minute spot or in a great and manifest outbreak. It has an insidious and imperceptible beginning,

starting from within and making thence steady and unbroken progress through the whole being. Confined perhaps at first to a small and insignificant sore—as Naaman’s phrase implied, “Strike his hand over the place”—it will spread irresistibly till the whole man is a mass of corruption. It makes the patient insensible, so that as the disease advances, feeling diminishes. It is practically incurable by any skill or power of man. It excludes from fellowship with man and with God. It is utterly defiling, and past human skill to remedy or cleanse. Ponder this dark scene; despair of man’s attempt to lighten it; and hear with grateful heart that God, and He alone, but He perfectly, is able to meet this awful evil, to heal and to cleanse the sufferer, to restore and bring near to Himself the outcast leper, and to make of one excluded even from man’s camp and city a priest fitted to minister in His holy dwelling.

There is wondrous comfort in this portion for everyone that is conscious of the touch of leprosy and the mark of sin. No leper ever appealed to the Lord Jesus in vain: “I will; be thou clean,” was His answer to every cry for cleansing. And when cleansed, the leper was in each case sent away to fulfil the Mosaic demands, by which his

cleansing was demonstrated and confessed, and the source of it acknowledged as from God alone. The steps of the ritual connected with this cleansing are very suggestive. First, the cleansing and healing had to come from God; those no man could impart. Then the cleansed one had to bring two birds, one to be killed, and the other when dipped in the blood of the slain one to be let loose into the open field. A vivid picture of Christ slain and risen, and in His risen form bearing the crucifixion marks. Then the healed man had to wash himself and his garments, and on the eighth day to bring another sacrifice, with the blood of which and with anointing oil he was touched upon ear and thumb and toe, like the priest in His consecration. Wondrous transformation! The blood of Christ and the unction of the Holy Ghost can prevail to make of an outcast, unfit for fellowship with man, a priest for God's temple and a friend for His heart!

A friend of God! After all, that is the end to which this whole book is tending, to which sacrifice, and priesthood, and purity, and holiness are to lead. See how our Lord connects the two thoughts, saying in John xiii. 10, "Ye are clean," and in xv. 3, "Now ye are clean through the

word which I have spoken unto you," and in xv. 14, 15, "Ye are my friends . . . Henceforth I call you not servants . . . but I have called you friends." What a wonderful thing is this, that our Lord should wish, and choose, and call His people to be His friends ! Is there anything in the wide world so well worth having as the friendship of the Lord Jesus ? Can anything in the wide world be worth keeping which would cost us the enjoyment of that friendship ? Who would not let all go, and readily, the loss of which would secure this glorious possession of becoming "the friend of God," ? The old mystics of the thirteenth century, with whom the true knowledge of God abode in the dark ages of the Church, were called "The Friends of God." Would that every modern Christian were eager to possess the same title and enjoy the same privilege !

And to enjoy it must mean the practical application of this lesson of cleansing and purity. Doubtful things, of which you are not sure that the Lord approves, must be put away ; whereas too often they are kept in use, in case approval may follow. If leprosy was suspected in man, or house, or garment, the suspected one was kept shut up and put away till cleanness was

proved. God was given the benefit of the doubt ; and danger of loss from possible uncleanness was considered, before thinking of the temporary loss for the possibly clean one. Doubtful things are a tremendous hindrance to Christian progress. In business matters there is immense need to-day for Christian men to stand firm against anything of doubtful honesty, quite as much as against palpable dishonesty. In home life there is a loud call for that to be carried out, which is often inscribed upon the walls: "The Lord is the Master in this house." He needs to be consulted by honest prayer, by definite search into His word, by careful consideration for others, as to books and furniture, house-fittings and hirings, servants and guests, recreations and amusements. Put the doubtful things out of court, let it be clear that all is chosen and done in order to please Him, and the blessing of His friendship shall be known, as it never can amid dubious concessions and indulgences.

Not least does the question of clean and unclean, right and wrong, pleasing or displeasing, come into the matter of earthly possessions, pounds, shillings, and pence. The old Israelite was taught exactly what proportion of his goods

God wished to claim, and how and when they were to be assigned to His use and employed at His command. It is fairly evident that the immense majority of Christians to-day practically never consult His will about this matter. The obedient Israelite gave always one-fifth, often one-fourth, of his income year by year to God's service; while comparatively few Christians to-day ever make any calculation as to gifts, ever attain to even one tenth, or ever, in this ordered manner, acknowledge God as the Giver of all they possess. Purity touches the pocket as well as the heart of the people of God. A stolen thing is unclean before God, a thing kept back from the rightful owner is a cause of impurity to him who holds it. And this impurity was charged of old on those who did not acknowledge God with the stated proportion of their goods. "Ye have robbed ME . . . in tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse" (Mal. iii. 8, 9).

Purity touches our relationship to others. A thing harmless in itself to you becomes impure or wrong if it harms another by your use of it. Here is much need for the Lord to be inquired of, and His word studied, that we may not, in things lawful to ourselves, create a stumbling

block to our neighbours. Romans xiv. 13-23, 1 Cor. viii. 4-13, 1 Cor. x. 13-33, are three passages in which this relationship is expanded. Practically, if twenty things are lawful to me and I can use them with a clear conscience, I may do so, at the outset. But if by two of them I should cause a weak brother to stumble, and by two I should offend a Jew, and by two more should hinder an unbeliever from listening to the Gospel, then my path is clear. The fourteen remaining things are enough for me; and I shall be far happier in the fellowship of God with those fourteen, than with the twenty and a cloud between my soul and my Lord.

Yet, after all, who is sufficient for these things? With the best endeavours and the keenest efforts, still "in many things we all offend." What then? Is communion to be ever interrupted? Is friendship with the Lord to be impossible? No. Here comes the great and crowning lesson upon purity conveyed by the teaching of the day of atonement, in Lev. xvi. Once a year for all Israel a great double sacrifice was offered: one by which the way into God's presence was provided, even for those whose prayers and service were faulty, and defective, and defiled still; the

other by which those faults, and defects, and defilements were pictured as borne away out of sight and mind. Once for all, for all the Church of Christ, He made such an atonement as could cover every question of defect and defilement such as clings to the best service of the best servant; and in the confidence of that atonement we may draw nigh boldly, hold fast firmly, and profess confidently our acceptance with and nearness to God. This it is that so meets every question of conscience, every fear of cloud, every uncertainty of acceptance, that by it we are said to be "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," and that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 10, 14).

The Lord has done that for us once for all. It needs no addition, permits of no repetition, can suffer no diminution. Here, in Him and His perfect atonement, is that which meets the deepest need, covers the uttermost fault, answers the last cry, satisfies the furthest longing, of every true child of God. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jno. i. 7).

CHAPTER XI

THE FOURTH PORTION OF LEVITICUS: HOLINESS

“Ye shall be holy : for I the Lord your God am holy ” (Lev. xix. 2).

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ” (2 Cor. vii. 1).

HAVING seen what God is to His people in sacrifice and priesthood, we have noticed that what His people should be to Him is summed up in purity and holiness. The latter of these two topics is the theme of this last portion of Leviticus, chapters xvii. to xxvii. The one Hebrew root from which the words “holy,” “holiness,” “sanctify” in this portion are derived occurs in the whole book one hundred and thirty-one times, and in these last eleven chapters eighty-one times. The subject presents on the positive side what purity presents on the negative; and the text of 2 Cor. vii. 1 fairly indicates the distinction between the two ideas. The two phrases “cleanse” and “perfecting holiness” are in

different tenses in the Greek. The former being in the aorist marks a definite action, done and done with once for all. The latter being in the present tense implies a continuous line of action and conduct. The former, bidding us "cleanse ourselves," demands that everything marked by God as unclean or defiling is to be at once and for ever put away. There is no reason for supposing that it must be a gradual experience in reference to any known evil. You do not tell one who has thieved every day, that if he becomes a Christian he must only steal on five days a week, by-and-by on four, then three, and in the course of time be cleansed from his thieving ways. No, you say with St. Paul, "Let him that stole steal no more." So if one has been in the habit of telling many lies every day, you do not advise him to gradually limit his untruths till in a few weeks or months he becomes truthful. And the text before us reasons in the same way, that anything recognized as defiling should be instantly and finally laid aside. Of course, you may presently come to discover that something more in your life is not according to God's mind, and that that also must be put away. And if in process of time growing light reveals further defects, they too must be

dealt with. Only notice that in each case the severance from the evil is intended to be definite and final; the will of the Lord must banish the wrong.

Is this a weight you cannot bear, a task beyond your powers? Of course it is, if you were left alone. But notice the introductory phrase, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved." Look at them in 2 Cor. vi. 16-18, and see that they are the lever to lift the weight, in them is the power to effect the cleansing. The fact that God will dwell and walk in obedient souls, that He will be their God and they His people, that He will receive and treat as sons and daughters those who are separate from defiling things: here is the power needed. "Is anything too hard for the Lord"—anything, that is, which He promises and commands? And what He promises He is present to fulfil, and what He bids He is there to enable. "Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit."

"Perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Here the present tense marks a continuous, a life-long course of action and conduct. The same word,

"perfecting" occurs in Heb. ix. 6: "The priests 77/75 100/1

went always into the first tabernacle, *accomplishing* the service of God." As the priests were every day engaged in accomplishing the duties of the sanctuary, so is the Christian to be every day engaged in perfecting holiness.

Now look at this word "holiness," and notice at the outset that its first meaning is not the one generally assigned to it—that of some supereminent piety. Its original thought is perhaps best expressed by "the relationship between God and a consecrated thing"; or, as Canon Girdlestone pithily defines it, "holiness is contact with God." This is evident as the meaning, when you find that the word is applied to all sorts of inanimate things to which the idea of piety cannot belong. You read of a holy day and a holy place, holy garments, a house or a field that is holy, animals, sacrifices, and altars that are holy, corn and fruits of the earth so named. It cannot therefore be that holiness means necessarily piety, but in every case it does mean a special relation to God and some form of contact with Him. This will explain the seeming difficulty, that people with such defects as the Corinthians in 1 Cor. iii. 1-3, can yet be called holy in 1 Cor. i. 2. In fact, five times out of six in

the New Testament the word is used of Christians, quite irrespective of their degree of attainment in life or conduct. Are they members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost? Then they are "holy" in God's sight.

But as soon as the title is given to anyone or anything, the power of it begins to work. It applies first to the relationship of the "holy" thing or one to God, but it immediately demands an altered usage or conduct. As given to conscious human beings, it is an instant summons to a new line of conduct, and so passes into the meaning of practical piety. Therefore it is quite in accordance with common sense and common usage to say: "Ye are holy; therefore ye are to be holy." We ourselves might well use such a phrase, if rebuking a peer for unworthy conduct, and might say: "You are a nobleman; you ought to be a noble man." The very name implies a claim; and the underlying thought of "separation," which is said to be at the root of holiness, conveys both lessons: "You are holy, and so separated from all other ownership to be only God's; now let the separation be effectual, in refusing obedience to any other Master and yielding it devotedly to the new Master.' It is a worthy

motto for every true soul: "O Lord our God, other lords besides Thee have had dominion over us: but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name" (Is. xxvi. 13). The relationship once established and recognized, is to be worked out in a life-long breach with all other rival claims and a life-long devotion to the claims of the Lord.

The section of the Book of Leviticus here under review, brings out into startling prominence the magnificent width and extent of the idea of holiness, as God's Word gives it. A brief glance at the chapters in order will develop this in remarkable fulness and detail.

Chapter xvii. concerns the table of God's people, and teaches how every meal in every godly household is to be considered as holy to God. The beautiful grace which German children say should express the desire and purpose at all Christian tables:

"Come, Lord Jesus, be Thou our Guest,
And let Thy gifts by Thee be blessed."

In olden days on Christmas Eve, when the family gathered round the festal board in Germany, there was a vacant chair left at the table of

every house, one place unoccupied, kept for the Lord Jesus. Just such is the lesson of the chapter before us: there should be in spirit a vacant place at the head of every table for every meal, where the Lord Himself may be "ruler of the feast," and teach us "whether we eat or drink . . . to do all to the glory of God."

Chapter xviii. passes from the table to the home. Great lessons of domestic purity and personal chastity are taught there, in direct and striking contrast to the vile impurities and awful foulness of heathenism. Readers are sometimes troubled, and scoffers often find a ready theme of mockery, where the seemingly harsh judgments upon the idolatrous nations of Canaan are recorded. But remember, that there are some diseases which can only be cured by the knife, and some conditions of diseased and corrupted national life from which the surrounding nations can only be saved by the extinction of the offending race. There are closed portions in the museum of Pompeii, where such horrors are found as fully to account for the judgment and the city's destruction. Missionaries from India will tell by hint and suggestion, what for shame's sake they cannot tell out plainly, that the highest

sanctities of heathenism are combined with the vilest impurities in worship. There seem to be times when such defilements actually threaten the world with corruption past endurance, and God's word says "the land spued out the nations!"

One thing at least such troubled readers or scoffing opponents should notice: that if God was strangely stern, at least He was awfully just. He threatened His own people Israel, that if they committed the same abominations, they should suffer the same penalties (Lev. xviii. 24-28). They did commit them, and they did suffer the same judgments; they were cut off and cast out from their land unto this day! "For our God is a consuming fire."

Chapter xix carries on the demand for holiness into the social and business life of God's people. Reverence towards parents and towards God (ver. 3-8): five pentads—sets of five rules each—for righteous conduct and character (ver. 9-18); rules for unlikeness to heathen nations and avoidance of their defilements (ver. 19-29); principles of godliness, courtesy, kindness (ver. 30-34); and stringent rules for commercial morality (ver. 35, 36): all these are enjoined as a

consequence of redemption and an acknowledgment of the dominion of the Lord (ver. 36, 37). Here is a wide and heart-searching word for Christian lives ; nothing escapes the word, or the eyes, of the Lord. At home and abroad, in worship and in domestic life, in conduct amid friends, in the world, and in business, everything is touched by the demands of the Lord, nothing is beyond His ken. Holiness is to be stamped on every ounce and every yard, every minute and every hour, every word and every deed, of the soul that thoroughly serves God.

Chapter xx. deals mainly with the penal judgments attached to the breach of God's law. Those who will not obey must be punished.

Chapters xxi. and xxii. have to do with priestly holiness. As all Israel was in the first instance called to be a " Kingdom of Priests," and all Christians have inherited the title (Exod. xix. 6 ; 1 Peter ii. 9), we may well note the rules enumerated here. The priest was to be holy in his mourning and his marriages, in his family rule, in his personal life, in his reverence for holy things, and in his official service for God. God's law was supreme for his whole life.

Chapter xxiii. concerns the feasts of the Lord,

and teaches how the days and years of God's people, as well as their tables, and homes, and business, and worship, were to be holy to God, and ruled by Him. He marked off special days for Himself, and demanded them to be kept for Himself as sacred samples, so to speak; specimens to be kept as an acknowledgment that "all their times were in His hand," and all their days and hours were His. Never a week could pass without the remembrance of His claim, and the confession of it, by hallowing the Sabbath day. Many different interpretations are given to the Sabbatic rule in the Christian Church; but none should be accepted, that does not convey in some sense the Christian's acknowledgment that his time is God's. Still, as of old, the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath day.

Chapter xxiv. has rules about the holy light and the shew bread, telling of the Light by which we are to be guided and the Bread by which we must be strengthened (John viii. 12; vi. 35). Another case of penal judgment, and magisterial laws of strict justice, occupy the remainder of the chapter.

Chapter xxv. describes the observance of the Sabbatic and the jubilee years, with their particu-

lar application to the possession of the land of Canaan by the Israelites. Practically these laws served to enforce God's claim to the whole land as His, and their own tenure of it as tenants at His will (ver. 23). Accordingly when for 420 years (apparently from the time when Solomon's reign of peace commenced) Israel failed to keep the Sabbatic years, these latter were exacted with the strictest severity and enforced by the 70 years Babylonian captivity (2 ~~Num.~~ xxxvi. 21). So literally did the Lord mean His claim to be acknowledged, so pointedly does He teach us to own that our lives, and years, and days, are His, to be kept for His service and used at His Will.

Chapter xxvi. contains the solemn promise and warnings attached to obedience and disobedience, to which further reference is made below.

Chapter xxvii. is occupied as an appendix with the matter of voluntary vows, questions of free-will service from thankful and devoted hearts, over and above the strict letter of the law.

Thus fully and particularly is unfolded for each willing servant the exact meaning and far-reaching extent of the divine call: "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." Surely we begin to say with the Psalmist: "I have seen an end of

all perfection : Thy commandment is exceeding broad." Shall we not also go on, as he did, to say : " Oh, how I love Thy law ! it is my meditation all the day " (Psa. cxix. 96, 97). Probably no study in all God's Word can so reveal how exceeding broad is His commandment, as this great claim for purity and holiness in the lives of His people. When we behold, like the Psalmist, God's commandment touching everything that concerns His people ; God's interest in every part of their lives ; God's purpose to be known and acknowledged, remembered and confessed, honoured and obeyed at every point and in every detail ; God's claim that all they called theirs should be His and owned as His ; God's finger put upon them and their homes, their possessions and professions, with the demand that they be used only for Himself and by His command ; then indeed we see how broad, exceeding broad, is the commandment ; how deep, exceeding deep, the love that underlies it ; how high, exceeding high, the place of nearness and intimacy to which He would call us.

It has been beautifully said, and sums up in perfect epigram the whole topic : "Holiness is the broad arrow of the King of Kings." You know

what that means ; and how wherever the broad arrow is seen the King's ownership is established. A canvas sail, a stone pillar, a tool, a mighty gun, a magnificent ship may bear this mark ; and in every case you say at once : " That belongs to the King." How fully does this describe the mark of holiness ; it is put upon everything that God claims as His own, that is brought into contact and relationship with Him. Look around the Christian's home and see where it is ; or rather, can you see anything where it is not ? The food of our tables, the homes we inhabit, the family we belong to, the conduct of our lives, our family relationships, our conduct in business, our words, language, and expressions, our judgments and estimates, our social intercourse, our relation to the world and its opinions, matters of courtesy and kindliness, of business transactions and official duties, our times of mourning and marrying, our rules for home government and principles of personal practice, our time in years, months, days, hours, moments, our health and strength, our knowledge and capacity, our prosperity, our purses, our very pennies—all, all are marked with the stamp of holiness ; of every one God says : " That is Mine."

Ah! How broad is His command. Nothing can escape, nothing can avoid it. Is there a single thing left in your life and mine, which these heart-searching chapters have not included in their range? We see, perhaps as never before, what this means: "Ye are not your own. Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are His" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20).

What response shall we make to such a demand, what obedience shall we render to such a call? It must be all—or nothing. No half-measures will serve here. One thing kept back mars the whole offering, one thing lacking spoils the whole life. But a whole-hearted response meets with a magnificent reception, a reward out of all proportion. Mark Israel's story once more. When God's Priests and Levites stepped out as He bade them, calling nothing their own and taking no portion of the land for themselves, then the Lord said: "I am thine inheritance." And the son who claims nothing for himself, and holds all as the Father's, is the one to whom the Father will say—not in reproach or rebuke, but in bounty and blessing: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

CHAPTER XII

THE AUTHENTICATION OF THE BOOK

“I will scatter you among the heathen . . . and your land shall be desolate. . . . And yet for all that . . . I will not cast them away”(Lev. xxvi. 33, 44).

A KIND of double appendix is provided for the Book of Leviticus in the last two chapters, xxvi. and xxvii., of which the former serves especially to enforce the preceding lessons on Israel and to authenticate their divine origin to us ; whilst the latter is an extension of the realm of service, especially provided for willing hearts who delight in the law of the Lord and serve him with joy and gladness.

Chapter xxvi. opens with two verses of warning and injunction, and then is divided into three main sections. The first (ver. 3-13) details the rich list of blessings bound up with whole-hearted obedience of God's law: blessings of prosperity and fruitfulness, peace and deliverance, victory and honour, the presence and the favour of God. The

second (ver. 14-39) has a solemn succession of judgments, chastisements, and penalties attached to disobedience and refusal to respect and hold God's law and covenant. The blessings are reversed: sickness and sorrow, disaster and defeat, unfruitful seasons and a desolate land, the sword and the pestilence and famine, the siege and ruin of cities, the utter dispersal of the people and their hopeless misery in all lands: such is the terrible picture of God's sure rebuke upon His disobedient people. The third section (ver. 40-46) conveys the cheering assurance, that upon humble repentance and confession of sin and return to God their judgments shall be reversed, and a glorious future shall yet await the people of Israel. The closing verse solemnly attests the authorship, and place, and subjects, and messenger of this book and all its details: the Lord gave them, in Mount Sinai, for the children of Israel, by the hand of Moses.

Now it is a matter of common knowledge and of most serious import, that a numerous class of students exists to-day, generally named by the title of "higher critics," who totally reject that last sentence. The sum of their conclusions is, that the Lord did not utter these words, they

were not given in Mount Sinai, they were not the terms for Israel's service in Canaan, and they were never communicated through Moses. The contradiction is absolute; is there evidence to decide where the truth is?

It seems to the believing student of God's Word, who has hitherto accepted its pages as true, and inspired, and worthy of trust, that this closing chapter of Leviticus serves amply to demonstrate the truth of the matter, and to confirm him absolutely in his complete reliance upon the authenticity and inspiration of the book. It serves as a divine sign manual, an attestation of the whole book, a seal from the hand of God confirming it all as His. In that way, if this chapter can be demonstrated as of God, the question of the earlier chapters is settled. For consider the case thus. If a document came to me in the name of our Sovereign, conveying all sorts of instructions as to his favour, and grace, and goodwill, as to his wishes and commandments, as to his requirements and purposes in connection with myself and my possessions, what would serve to assure me that it was all genuine and authentic? I might spend my time in vain by examining the document in its details; might be puzzled and

distracted by finding that one scribe had written one part, and another the rest ; might criticize the style, compare the sections, contrast it with other documents; and yet never arrive at a sure conclusion. But the moment I turn to the close of the document, the matter is settled ; for there stands the royal signature, attested by the King's seal, and witnessed by the two chief ministers of the crown. That closes the question. All doubts vanish, and full confidence is established ; it is sealed, signed, and settled by the King's handwriting : all is sure.

Now it is just in that way that chapter xxvi. serves to authenticate the Book of Leviticus. It contains an amazing prophecy, a description of Israel's history for at least 3,400 years to come. The description would not fit on to the experience and history of any other nation in the world ; but it is true and has been true to the very letter, of the people of Israel. Look at its details. The first section promised a period of blessing consequent on obedience, such as was richly fulfilled under King Solomon ; but that might have been told of any rising race, or (as the "higher critics" think) might have been ingeniously written long after Solomon's time to give an air of prophecy to

mere history. But now look at the second section, the record of judgments threatened upon disobedience.

This section declares that under conditions of rebellion against God's law, Israel should suffer a series of penalties, in disaster and defeat, plague, famine, and pestilence, in overthrow and captivity, such as all history of the Jewish race affirms as true. Yet even here and so far, perhaps a skilful guess might have been made, or the fraudulent forger might have coloured the document from existing facts in later years, and so have cleverly palmed it off as of Mosaic date. But look closer still, and you will see three marks of this divine judgment, by which this case of Israel is severed from all other nations, and of which only in these days the amazing truth is becoming apparent.

The prophetic warning here given to Israel foretold three characteristics of the judgment: their total exclusion from the land, whilst the land itself became desolate; their universal dispersion among the nations of the earth (enlarged from ver. 33 in Deut. xxviii. 64); and yet, most marvellous conclusion, their complete preservation as a separate race among other races,

so that as a united and unmingled race they should yet again inherit their land, when their time of repentance comes. Here is the marvel: this is the very hand of God. No other race in the whole world's history has ever passed through this double experience of universal dispersion joined to absolute separation from the surrounding nations. Look at our own British race. We are composed of Britons, Picts, Scots, Angles, Jutes, Danes, Saxons, and Normans. Not one of us can sever our ancestry to-day from this amalgamation of races, and say, "I am a Pict, or a Jute, or a Norman": all are inextricably mingled in the composite British race, even though dwelling in one land, and with conditions favourable if such separation had been possible. At least for 200 years after the Conquest the Normans were fairly separate from the Saxons, perhaps for 300; but in 500 all distinction had totally vanished, the races were entirely blended. But look at the Jews. They have been scattered literally among all the nations of the earth for over 1800 years, and are so scattered to-day; yet they are as separate and distinct as when they came out of Egypt 3,400 years ago! If the "higher critics" were right, and this book a forgery of the late

centuries before Christ, then you have the yet more amazing conclusion that a fraudulent forger is an inspired prophet, and he is able to authenticate his forgery by the absolutely unique fulfilment of more than 2000 years !

No, that is impossible. The truth of the prophecy evident before our eyes to-day is proof positive that the book is genuine and its words true. The old test of Deut. xviii. 22 and Jer. xxviii. 9 still holds good : " When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken " ; " When the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him."

Surely it was not in vain that the Lord said some 2,600 years ago of the people of Israel, " Ye are my witnesses " (Isa. xliii. 10, 12 ; xliv. 8), and " This people have I formed for Myself ; they shall shew forth My praise " (Isa. xliii. 21). Every Jew whom you see and recognize as a Jew, is one more attestation to God's truth, and one more proof that this chapter of Leviticus is God's sign manual to the authenticity of the book as divinely inspired and

absolutely true. We are always safe if we use God's proofs, and are sure to find the truth by their means. Since this proof of prophecy and verification by the Jewish race are before us, let us boldly and confidently maintain and proclaim that we know the Word to be inspired, and can prove it to be so. We can use this book in the calmest and most restful assurance that it is God's Scripture, inspired, trustworthy, and profitable.

CHAPTER XIII

DEVOTION AND FREEWILL OFFERINGS

“Every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord” (Lev. xxvii. 28).

“What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me” (Ps. cxvi. 12).

A CAREFUL study and right understanding of this book must surely result in a conviction that it is full of the benefits of the Lord for His people: the blessings of sacrifice and priesthood developed and fulfilled in Christ, and the blessings of purity and holiness wrought out by the indwelling Spirit of God. What then shall be the conclusion of the happy soul that thus has learnt to know and serve the Lord? The Psalmist gives a threefold answer: “I will take the cup of salvation”—that is praise; “I will call upon the name of the Lord”—that is prayer; “I will pay my vows unto the Lord”—that is the freewill offering of a grateful heart.

Now the last chapter of Leviticus is particularly occupied with the subject of vows, as the ex-

pressed terms in which a soul devotes himself or his goods to God and His service. And though the New Testament does not apparently recommend or counsel the use of vows, yet it is full of calls to devotion and consecration of spirit, soul, and body, members and possessions, life and time to God. So then this chapter xxvii. may well serve to summon us to the right conclusion, if our hearts have responded to the blessings unfolded in the book, and would fain answer back to the Giver of such grace and goodness.

A glance at the chapter reveals that such vows of devotion may concern the person (verse 2), the house (verse 14), the field (verse 16), or the cattle (verse 28), of the one who devotes it; suggesting that the man and all he has are thus regarded as offerings fit for God's service. They are anyhow God's gifts; as the Apostle asks, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. xxix. 14); and thus, whatsoever we may give, we must still say, "Of Thine own have we given Thee." (1 Chron. xxix. 14).

The cheering thought underlies this chapter that God is well pleased with the freewill offerings of His people, He "loveth a cheerful giver." Rightly understood, there is no wiser, or happier,

or better principle for the Christian life, than this heart-whole devotion to God of ourselves (Rom. xii. 1, 2), and all we have. It does not mean, as the monastic idea so mistakenly supposes, that in handing ourselves over to God we are to come under the sway and authority of some other frail mortal like ourselves; but that henceforth the Lord is recognized as Lord of all, and is referred to for counsel and guidance, decision and direction, in every portion of the life. He becomes indeed the Master of the house, the Senior Partner of the business, the Owner of the possessions, and the Ruler in the heart of His faithful ones.

The picture of the mother of Moses may serve to illustrate the experience thus found. She gives up her son, and hands him over to the waters, as put out of her possession for ever. But presently she receives him back again, not as owner, but as keeper, not as bringing him up for herself, but for the daughter of the king. The old relation continues outwardly, but a new relation is established inwardly; she has learnt to say, "Not my own," and to hold what was hers at the will of another.

So should we aim to live; so may we devote and

surrender ourselves and our all to God; so may we prove that we are stewards, entrusted with God's possessions to use them at God's will, and for faithful service to win a full reward. "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages" (Exod. ii. 9). "And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12).

One limitation is however to be observed. A certain portion of every Israelite's possessions was due to God's service in any case, and of that—note it well—no freewill offering could be made, nor vow could make mention. It was the Lord's absolutely: "All the tithe of the land . . . is the Lord's. . . And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord" (Lev. xxvii. 30, 32). A fixed proportion of every Christian's income must in any case be considered the Lord's, due to be paid over as a matter of honesty, and apart from freewill-offering or thank-offering. How often a Christian, who makes no calculation, and never reaches the tithe, much less the fifth of the ordinary Israelite's dues, puts down a gift for

God's work as a "Thank-offering." A grateful heart and a consecrated life should know better than that. Let us reckon honestly with God, each one with deliberate calculation, and honest prayer, and faithful study of God's Word, what proportion should be absolutely and always His—for the relief of the poor, the support of the ministry, and the spread of the Gospel. That first; and then, out of a life and possessions which we recognize as a trust and a stewardship from Him, let us seek His will for the right use of all, and see how far a grateful heart can use everything to the glory of God.

R. W. SIMPSON & Co., LTD.
PRINTERS,
RICHMOND, LONDON.

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